

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application.

LISTING OF CLAIMS

1. (Currently Amended) ~~Inner~~ An inner ear stimulation prosthesis including excitation means ~~(11)~~ designed to generate vibrations capable of exciting a patient's ear, ~~characterized in that it comprises~~ comprising:

an implantable portion ~~(1, 1a to 1g)~~, including a rod ~~(2, 2a, 2e, 2f)~~ capable of transmitting vibrations and that is designed so as to be capable of transmitting vibrations generated by the excitation means ~~(11)~~ directly to the patient's inner ear.

2. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod ~~(2, 2a, 2e, 2f)~~ is designed to be placed in contact with a semicircular canal of the patient's inner ear.

3. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 1 or 2, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod ~~(2, 2a, 2e, 2f)~~ is designed to be placed in contact with the external semicircular canal of the patient's inner ear.

4. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 1 or 3, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod ~~(2, 2a, 2e, 2f)~~ is made of a hard and rigid biocompatible material selected from metals, ~~plastic materials and ceramic materials~~ plastics, ceramics and combinations thereof.

5. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod ~~(2, 2a, 2f)~~ has a cross-section with a flattened shape.

6. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of claims 1 to 5~~ claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod ~~(2, 2a, 2f)~~ comprises at least one elbow ~~(4)~~ so as to be capable of connecting an external portion of the

patient's skull to the inner ear ~~without requiring complex surgery involving total anesthesia of the patient.~~

7. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 6, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod includes first and second ends and (2, 2a, 2f) has a length between the elbow (4) and its the end in contact with a portion of the patient's inner ear ~~[[,]]~~ of between about 20 and 30 mm ~~and has an elbow angle between its two end portions of between 70° and 130°.~~

8. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 to 7 claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the surface of the implantable portion (1) is treated so as to prevent any osseointegration.

9. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 to 8 claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod (2a) is pivotably mounted on a support (7, 7').

10. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 to 9 claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the excitation means (11) are arranged in an external casing (10, 10', 10a) and are designed so as to generate vibrations intended to be transmitted through the patient's skin to a plate (3) rigidly connected to the rod (2, 2a).

11. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the plate (3) has a substantially rectangular shape with foam edges of which the length is between 6 mm and 20 mm and the width is between 3 mm and 10 mm.

12. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 10 ~~or 11~~, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the external casing (10, 10', 10a) is integrated in an object capable of being held on the patient's head so that the excitation means (11) are arranged opposite the plate (3) of the implantable portion (1).

13. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 12, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the object capable of being held on the patient's head is selected from ~~either~~ one of a pair of eyeglasses or a casing that fits around the ear.

14. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 10 to 12 claim 10, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the external casing (10a) includes at least one magnetic part (18) intended to cooperate with at least one magnetic part (8) provided in the implantable portion (1a, 1b) so as to hold the excitation means opposite the plate (3).

15. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 to 8 claim 1, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the excitation means (11) are integrated in the implantable portion (1c, 1d, 1e) and coupled directly with the rod (2e).

16. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to ~~one of~~ claims 1 to 8 claim 1, ~~characterized in that the~~ wherein said rod (2f) is rigidly connected to attachment means (41, 45, 46) for attaching the rod to the patient's skull bone.

17. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 16, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the excitation means (11) are housed in an external casing (50, 50') equipped with coupling means (51), so as to be removably attached through the patient's skin to attachment means (41, 41') ~~intended to be attached to~~ the patient's skull bone.

18. (Currently Amended) ~~Prosthesis~~ The prosthesis according to claim 17, ~~characterized in that~~ wherein the external casing (50, 50') ~~containing~~ includes a microphone (14) ~~is intended to be attached on the side of a totally defective ear of the patient, while the rod (2f) is intended to be attached so as to excite the other, non-defective, ear of the patient, with the vibrations generated by the excitation means being transmitted to the rod by bone conduction of the patient's skull bone.~~

19-22 (Cancelled)

23. (New) The prosthesis according to claim 6 wherein said elbow of said rod provides an elbow angle of between about 70° and 130° between the first and second ends of the rod.

24. (New) The prosthesis of claim 1 wherein said prosthesis provides neurostimulation for treating tinnitus.

25. (New) The prosthesis of claim 1 wherein said prosthesis provides neurostimulation for treating balance disorders.